

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/808,509
Amendment filed August 7, 2006
Reply to OA dated May 8, 2006

REMARKS

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Makiya and Supervisory Examiner Ward for the courteous and helpful interview of July 25, 2006 during which the present amendment were discussed.

Applicants have amended Claim 3 to remove the objection thereto and have amended Claims 1 and 3, the only remaining claims, to clarify the present invention.

As now amended, Claim 1 is to a dial plate for use in a vehicle instrument panel that has a segment display area including indexes, having laminated patterns of light emitting elements, the laminated patterns formed on a substrate, that is glass or a resin, and which substrate does not comprise a printed circuit board, of the dial plate by laminating electroluminescent materials through printing, and having a specific design corresponding to external data. A wiring pattern for supplying electric power to the light emitting elements is formed on the substrate as a part of the laminated patterns through printing, while Claim 3, as amended, is to a method of producing such a dial plate. Such a dial plate and method are not taught or suggested in the prior art.

In the Office Action, Claims 1 and 3 were rejected as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) by Macher et al. (U.S. 6,641,276). Reconsideration and removal of that rejection is respectfully requested in view of the present amendment to the claims and the following remarks.

In the Office Action, it is alleged that Macher teaches a dial plate similar to that claimed where laminated patterns are formed on a substrate (4) of the dial plate and a wiring pattern for supplying power to light emitting elements is formed on the substrate through printing. The Office

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Action designates the substrate of Macher to be a printed circuit board having a wiring pattern printed thereon.

As Applicants understand Macher, the printed circuit board (4) is not a substrate on which laminated patterns of light emitting elements are formed. The Macher device provides a support plate (3) of glass to which a printed circuit board (4) is connected. The support plate acts as a substrate on which an electroluminescent layer assembly (2) is applied. While the printed circuit board may have a pattern printed thereon, the wiring pattern is not printed on the substrate as required in the present claimed dial plate and method.

As Macher is understood, his substrate is the support plate (3) and not the printed circuit board (4), and no wiring pattern is printed on the substrate (3). As mentioned in the present specification at page 12, lines 7-12, since the wiring pattern is printed on substrate (11), use of a wiring board as the substrate is not necessary. At page 5, lines 11-17, it is also disclosed that by printing the wiring pattern on the substrate, it is unnecessary to produce a conventional wiring substrate, so that the cost of producing the dial plate can be reduced. Such advantages are not possible with the Macher illuminating device.

Claims 1 and 3 have been amended to specify that the substrate, on which the laminated patterns are formed, is glass or a resin and does not comprise a printed circuit board, in contrast to the Macher device.

In view of the present amendments to Claims 1 and 3 and the above remarks, those claims are believed to be patentable and early action towards allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

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If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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